

The following article is adapted with permission from the www.mpioutdoors.com website. This article is filled with great information for keeping your kids safe in the outdoors. Please take a few minutes to read it and then work with your kids to build a...

Kid's Kit



INTRODUCTION TO PARENTS

Take a child with you into the outdoors and what will transpire will be a winning and enjoyable lifetime experience, for you and for the child.

No one wants to think about their child being lost and alone in the outdoors, but the fact is that anyone can get lost. You can make a very positive and caring step in providing an added measure of protection for your child by taking the time to assemble a KIDS KIT. This kit alone is only part of the solution towards providing a level of outdoor protection for your child should the need arise. You must now take the time and have the patience to teach, not preach, to your child the proper uses of the items in this kit. You must also reinforce the need for them to understand how important this new knowledge and skills will become someday as it may have to be used by them.

A KIDS KIT should be designed to provide some of the critical products needed in an outdoor survival situation as well as the means to help educate the child should they become separated from their parents in the outdoors. An informed and educated child is a safer child, and the knowledge of what and how to be more comfortable, safe and more easily found is a powerful gift to give to yourself and to your child.

The following guidelines, and they are only that, should help you explain to your child what they should do if they become separated from you or a friend in the outdoors. In easily understood language and with a caring but serious attitude you must demonstrate how a child can attract help or let you know where they are. You, as a parent, must help each child develop the ability and skills to make their situation more comfortable. Conversely, you as the parent will also be aware of what to look for and listen for, should the need arise.

The KIDS KIT should be constructed to fit into a small compact "belt pack" that the child can wear at all times and not encumber their movement or enjoyment of the outdoors. There are many available "fanny packs" that will fit this criteria, look for ones with a water bottle attached as part of the overall design.

Things to put in your KIDS KIT

The following is a suggested list of contents and ideas on how to instruct your child in their use and need, should the situation of being lost ever occur.

WATER BOTTLE: The easily accessible bottle should always be kept filled with your choice of water, juice drinks or other liquid nourishment. It is important to educate your child to drink only when they are thirsty. Liquid intake is important in all outdoor adventures and helps provide a sense of security and well being.

LIGHTSTICK: This bright light source is both a sense of personal security for the child as well as a way to help locate them after dark. Darkness can be an uncomfortable situation, and a light source that can be held close or hung from a tree will provide a sense of assurance to a child who is waiting for you to come and find them. The Lightstick should be the 12 hour type, found in most outdoor stores as it will last throughout the night and can be easily used by the child. Because it does not require batteries it is lightweight and easily packed within the kit.

EMERGENCY BLANKET: The SPACE® Brand EMERGENCY BLANKET is universally available and very reliable. This unique safety product has provided personal safety, shelter, warmth and protection to all those who venture into the outdoors for more than 30 years. This unique product will reflect and retain up to 80% of radiated body heat to keep a person warm and comfortable. It is also waterproof and windproof and the feeling of being wrapped up and protected is important to the psychological well being of anyone who is lost or stranded. It is also very visible from great distances.

RESCUE WHISTLE: Blowing a whistle requires little energy and is highly audible in the outdoors. A whistle can be heard over long distances and is an easy signaling device for children to use. Remembering to blow in blasts of three in a row every few minutes, or every time they see or hear something can also help a child focus on a positive task. This is not a toy, but a very valuable signaling device.

HIGH VISIBILITY SCARF: The use of a bright yellow or orange scarf, or a large scrap of cloth material will help make your child's location more visible, either by waving it at the end of a long stick, staking it out near their location as a marking flag or hanging it in a nearby tree. If the child is asleep this signal scarf will help alert rescuers that they are nearby, if hung on a tree branch, etc.. This is another way to focus the child's time into a positive task. The bright color is intended to attract attention and is an unmistakable signal to any parent who has reviewed the KIDS KIT components with their child.

SIGNAL MIRROR: A small and lightweight plastic highly reflective mirror can be used to attract attention during the day. Reflected light can be seen at great distances in the outdoors, a plus for rescuers, search planes, etc. It like all the other special components of the KIDS KIT help to focus the attention of the child into a positive task.

PERSONAL CARE ITEMS: The KIDS KIT should contains a small packet of tissues for personal hygiene use. Also include some small bandages to help provide a means to cover minor cuts and abrasions. Consider including some damp towelettes to allow the child to clean up and refresh themselves. These items should be purposely included to help add a sense of preparedness in the child's mind, they will feel better about themselves knowing that these items are available.

The KIDS KIT "fanny pack" that you choose should have zippered compartments to hold all these items mentioned above. They should be inspected each time you venture into the outdoors to be sure they are there "if and when needed".

You may wish to include high energy food bars, snack items, a personal ID card or any other personal item or items for your child's use.

Constant review is a proven and powerful reinforcing tool when coupled with practice sessions and your personal creativity. These review times will help to make the value of the KIDS KIT a very beneficial and special product for you and your child.

BE AWARE

BE PREPARED

BE SAFE

What to say to your child about the KIDS KIT

The following is only an outline of what you may wish to discuss with your child:

From Parent to Child:

Now that you are old enough to begin going on some bigger outdoor adventures, there are some things we need to discuss.

No matter where we go, what we do or how careful we are, there is always the possibility that you or I could get lost or look around and not be able to locate each other.

I want to talk about what you should do if that ever happens, so you will be able to help me find you faster and make yourself comfortable until I get there.

First of all, if you ever get separated from me or a group you are with, the most important thing to do is to stay in one place. I will bring some friends and start looking for you where I last knew you were, so don't leave that place. Find a rock, a log or a tree and make it your "house" or "fort" until I find you. Make sure that your "house" is somewhere out in the open where I will be able to see you. You must know that I will not stop hunting for you until I find you, so just stay in one place and wait for me.

It is important to me that you know that I will not be angry or upset if you get lost--anyone can get lost-- and, when I find you, I will be really happy and want to hear all about what you did while we were separated.

This KIDS KIT has a lot of really neat things in it that will help me find you and help make you more comfortable while you are waiting. I want us to look at all these things together and then pack them back up so they will be there for you to use when we go outdoors together.

The KIDS KIT fastens around your waist easily and then stays out of your way for hiking, climbing, biking or other activities we will be doing in the outdoors.

One of these zippered compartments is empty, waiting for you to fill it with things like snacks, your magnifying glass, a small flashlight, or some neat things that you've collected while you and I are exploring.

The other compartment is full of things that will help me find you and will help make you more comfortable while you are waiting for me.

Let's take a look at all these things now and we can practice together how to use them.

PARENTS:

- Open KIDS KIT and take out components. Find a comfortable setting to discuss these items.

WATER BOTTLE: Outdoor adventures make you thirsty and your body needs water. We'll make sure this is filled before we go anywhere. Do not drink all your water at once, so you can drink when you are thirsty. Do not drink water from any creek or pond that you may find when we are not together, it may not be clean and could make you sick.

PARENTS:

- Make sure the bottle is always filled.
- Water is more important than food.
- While it might be tempting to put juice in that bottle, please be aware that sweet liquids will attract both ants and bees.
- Have your child practice putting the bottle in the compartment and tightening the cap.
- Let your child know how to conserve the water and to drink only when thirsty. This is important.

EMERGENCY BLANKET: This blanket can be your shelter while you are waiting for us to find you. It will keep you warm and keep rain or snow off of you. Wrap it all around you, tuck it in around you and hug yourself. You can wrap up in it like a sleeping bag if you get tired or sleepy. Do not put it over your face. We can't take it out and try it now, because we could NEVER get it folded up so small again, BUT it will be in your pack, be sure to use it when you need it.

PARENTS:

- The EMERGENCY BLANKET reflects up to 80% of your child's radiated body heat. A special version of this unique product has been made especially to maximize its effective use by children. It is a great source of warmth, shelter and comfort and has provided protection to millions of outdoor enthusiasts for over 30 years.
- Practice using a blanket from your home to show your child how to wrap up and sit holding the blanket close to them to concentrate their body heat.
- Tell your child not to sit directly on the ground, but to put down some branches, leaves or pine needles to insulate them from the cold ground.
- Make sure that if they are tired that they wrap up in the blanket to keep them warm. Again insulate the ground under them before laying down.
- The blanket will also make them be better seen at night by searchers flashlights.

RESCUE WHISTLE: You know how to use a whistle because you've used them as toys before. This one is in your KIDS KIT for a special reason. If you get lost or separated, you should blow three times in a row on this whistle. Wait a few minutes and blow three times in a row again. Repeating this signal lets anyone who can hear it know that you are near and would like some help. You should continue doing this every so often or if you hear or see something. I can hear a whistle better than I can hear your voice and blowing a whistle won't tire you out.

PARENTS:

- Emphasize the use of the whistle for emergency purposes, not to cry "wolf".
- Anything your child can do to alert others to their presence will help.
- Make sure the lanyard is securely tied to the whistle.
- Have your child practice the three short blasts.

HIGH VISIBILITY SCARF: This scarf is a super bright color that will help us find you. If you see someone, you can wave it by hand or attach it to the end of a long stick and wave it like a flag. You could also tie (or loop) it to a tree, this will help us find you as we can see it from far away. Put it out near you, up high if you get tired and are going to rest. I will be looking for this scarf because I know that you have it with you, so put it somewhere where we can see it. It will be a great signal for us to look for.

PARENTS:

- The scarf will only be visible if it is used.
- Emphasize that you will be looking for the scarf, so they need to remember to use it.
- Practice by playing Hide & Seek in the yard. See how quickly you can find your child when they hang the scarf out in a visible area.
- Show them exactly how to use it by placing on a stick or broom handle, etc and waving it to attract attention.
- Visibility is vital in finding lost children, let the searchers know about this signal scarf.

LIGHTSTICK: This is another neat thing to be only used in an emergency because it can only be used once. Believe it or not, if you snap this stick (you kind of have to act like you are trying to break it) and then shake it a little, it lights up brightly for a long time. You can use it like a flashlight or a lantern while you're waiting for us. Make sure you use it at night. If you hang it up someplace it would be a great way for us to find you after dark. It will lose its light little by little, but it stays bright for a long time. Only use this when it starts to get dark.

PARENTS:

- Reassure your child that most people are found in the daytime, but if it takes a little longer than usual, they can use the Lightstick.
- The Lightstick is a great visible signal at night, and your child should know you will be looking

for it.

- Make sure your child knows it can only be used once...you may want to keep a couple of extra Lightsticks on hand to replace any that are used.
- Tying some string onto the Lightstick will enable you child to hang it onto a tree or to wear around their neck for added personal security.

SIGNAL MIRROR: This looks like an ordinary mirror, but watch what it can do. If you learn how to reflect sunlight with this, we will be able to see the light signal from really far away. You can hold the mirror above you, signal toward high places or in a circle all the way around you, or in the direction of people if you see anyone. You can signal without using a lot of energy.

PARENTS:

- Practice directing the light beam with your child. Place paper plates on trees or stakes around your yard and practice "hitting the targets".
- The light beam can be seen for great distances.
- Hold the mirror in one hand, stretch your other arm out in front of you and shine the light beam on one finger. This will help both you and your child to direct the beam in any direction.
- Practice "finding" your child by locating the source of the signal, let you child find you the same way.
- Your child needs to be aware that shining the beam directly into someone's eyes will hurt.

PERSONAL CARE ITEMS: Tissues, small bandages and wipes are included in your KIDS KIT just in case you get a cut or scrape while you are on an adventure.

You can clean up a little and feel refreshed with the wet wipes and bandage a cut or scrape with the bandages while you wait for me.

If you need to go to the bathroom, you can use the tissues just like toilet paper.

PARENTS:

- Replenish these items as they are used.
- Check them occasionally to insure they are in the kit.

All right! Let's put these things back in the KIDS KIT so that they are there for our next outdoor adventure.

Help me remember how to use these things as we put them away.

- 1.WATER BOTTLE*
- 2.SPACE BLANKET*
- 3.WHISTLE*
- 4.FLAG/SCARF*
- 5.LIGHTSTICK*
- 6.SIGNAL MIRROR*
- 7.BANDAGES*
- 8.TISSUES/ WIPES*

Don't forget to pack some snacks and other items that will personalize the KIDS KIT for your child.

Tucking a small family photo into the KIDS KIT will provide an extra touch of comfort for your child.

Practice and role-playing every so often will reinforce the proper use of the items included in the KIDS KIT.

Have the KIDS KIT packed and available and ready to go when you begin your outdoor adventure.

Dress your child in bright colors. Perhaps have them wear a brightly colored hat. Visibility is a key element.

Teach your child to always look around them when they are hiking or taking part in activities in the outdoors. Have them note landmarks or unusual areas. Have them look backwards from time to time to note how the trail will look upon their return. Have them practice re-tracing their steps from time to time.

In the event your child does get separated, make sure they know it is all right to be worried and afraid, but that you will find them as soon as possible.

BE AWARE--BE PREPARED--BE SAFE

Dear Parent,

Thank you for making the decision to build the KIDS KIT, you have made a choice of concern that we hope will provide a higher level of personal protection and security for you and your child as you both enjoy the Outdoors.

I feel it is important to relate to you how and why the KIDS KIT was developed. I have an nine year old grandson who I take with me on a wide variety of Outdoor Adventures. One day he asked me why I would not make him an outdoor Kit to wear that was like mine, his reason was that "kids need an outdoor kit too". Knowing that he always wants to act and be just like his GRANPOP (I love it...), I let this comment pass as we proceeded to enjoy the wonders of nature in the high mountains of New Hampshire.

Several days later the newspapers and television carried a story about a child who was lost in the wilderness areas of Central Massachusetts, it was major news as all efforts were being made by hundreds of people to conduct a search for her. They found her wandering after being lost three days, and the comments of my special grandson about "kids" having their own "type of personal survival kit" haunted me. This may have happened to him, I more than anyone realize that anyone can get lost or separated in the outdoors, it has been my business for many years. Almost immediately the concept started to take shape in my mind into an Outdoor Safety Product. The main consultant and test person has been my grandson, Patrick III. A lot of other people have helped to refine the original concept into what is now the KIDS KIT.

We truly hope that your child never has to use the contents of the KIDS KIT in a real survival situation, but if they do, we know that they will have the necessary products and knowledge to know what to do so that they can be easily found, quickly.

Thank you for being part of my grandson's concern and care for kids in the outdoors. Thank you for caring for the most precious possession we all have, our children. Should you have any questions or comments, please feel free to EMAIL us.

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